

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00

USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 SAJ-01 /054 W

----- 126574

O R 161019Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5679

INFO AMCONSUL BREMEN

AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF

AMCONSUL FRANKFURT

AMCONSUL HAMBURG

AMCONSUL MUNICH

AMCONSUL STUTTGART

USMISSION USBERLIN

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AMEMBASSY BERLIN

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, GW

SUBJECT: NATIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF LOWER SAXONY GOVERNMENT CHANGE

REF: HAMBURG 0036

SUMMARY: THE SURPRISE ELECTION OF CDU MINISTER PRESIDENT ALBRECHT IN HANNOVER JAN 15 HAS NATIONAL REPERCUSSIONS. IF ALBRECHT IS ABLE TO FORM A MAJORITY GOVERNMENT (I.E., IF A DEFECTOR FROM THE COALITION PARTIES IS WILLING TO GO ON PUBLIC RECORD AND VOTE FOR ALBRECHT'S

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CABINET), THE CDU/CSU MAJORITY IN THE BUNDES RAT WILL

BE SECURED EVEN WITHOUT THE SAARLAND. IF HE IS FORCED TO FORM A MINORITY OR COALITION GOVERNMENT, THE VOTING BEHAVIOR OF LOWER SAXONY IN THE BUNDES RAT WOULD DEPEND UPON WHAT ARRANGEMENTS HE HAD MADE IN ADVANCE TO OBTAIN TACIT OR EXPLICIT SUPPORT OUTSIDE THE CDU IN THE LANDTAG. WHATEVER THE OUTCOME, THE ELECTION OF ALBRECHT IS A SETBACK TO THE SPD/FDP COALITION IN BONN. END SUMMARY

1. THE SURPRISE ELECTION OF CDU MINISTER PRESIDENT ALBRECHT IN LOWER SAXONY HAS REPERCUSSIONS ON THE NATIONAL LEVEL. DEFENSE MINISTER LEBER TOLD AMBASSADOR HILLENBRAND THAT SHOULD ALBRECHT FORM A MAJORITY GOVERNMENT, THE CDU/CSU LAENDER WILL BE ABLE TO STYMIE IMPORTANT GOVERNMENT LEGISLATION EVEN IF THE SPD AND FDP ARE VICTORIOUS IN THE BUNDESTAG ELECTION NEXT OCTOBER. THIS SITUATION, HE EMPHASIZED, IS THE RESULT OF A WEAKNESS IN THE CONSTITUTION CREATING A POLITICAL SITUATION WHICH PREVENTS THE WILL OF THE ELECTORATE FROM BEING REALIZED. CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT ADMITTED THAT THE ELECTION WAS A SETBACK FOR THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS AND HAS IMPROVED CDU/CSU CHANCELLOR CANDIDATE KOHL'S CHANCES IN THE OCTOBER ELECTION.

2. THREE ALTERNATIVE GOVERNMENT ARRANGEMENTS COULD RESULT FROM ALBRECHT'S ELECTION. ALBRECHT CAN FORM A MAJORITY GOVERNMENT IF ONE OF THE COALITION DEPUTIES WHO ABSTAINED (3) OR VOTED FOR HIM (1) IN THE SECRET BALLOT FOR MINISTER PRESIDENT IS WILLING TO REPEAT PUBLICLY HIS PERFORMANCE WHEN ALBRECHT PRESENTS HIS CABINET TO THE LANDTAG (WHICH HE MUST DO WITHIN THREE WEEKS) FOR APPROVAL. THEN THE CABINET WOULD RECEIVE THE NECESSARY MAJORITY.

3. A SECOND POSSIBILITY WOULD RESULT IF ALBRECHT CAN-NOT OBTAIN MAJORITY SUPPORT FOR HIS CABINET. THEN IF THERE IS NO MAJORITY SUPPORT FOR DISSOLVING THE LANDTAG AND CALLING NEW ELECTIONS, HE MAY FORM A MINORITY GOVERNMENT AND ATTEMPT TO OBTAIN SUPPORT FOR LEGISLATION ON A CASE BY CASE BASIS.
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4. THE THIRD ALTERNATIVE WOULD BE TO FORM A COALITION GOVERNMENT WITH THE FDP OR SPD WHICH WOULD INSURE THE NECESSARY MAJORITY. BOTH THE SPD AND FDP HAVE DENIED ANY INTEREST IN DOING SO BUT ALBRECHT, AT LEAST IN PUBLIC, IS KEEPING ALL OPTIONS OPEN.

5. THE EFFECTS OF ALBRECHT'S ELECTION ON THE BUNDES RAT

DEPEND UPON WHICH ALTERNATIVE GOVERNMENT ARRANGEMENT EVOLVES. IN THE CASE OF A CDU MAJORITY GOVERNMENT, THE FIVE LOWER SAXONY VOTES IN THE BUNDESRAT WILL SECURE THE CDU/CSU MAJORITY (NOW 21 TO 20 INCLUDING THE SAARLAND AMONG THE CDU/CSU LAENDER) EVEN WITHOUT SUPPORT FROM THE SAARLAND. IN SUCH A CASE ALL THE BUNDESRAT COMMITTEES WOULD HAVE A CDU/CSU MAJORITY (NOW THERE IS AN SPD/FDP MAJORITY BECAUSE BERLIN CAN VOTE IN COMMITTEES), AND IN THE JOINT CONFERENCE COMMITTEE, WHICH MEDIATES BETWEEN THE BUNDESTAG AND BUNDESRAT, THE SPD/FDP AND THE CDU/CSU REPRESENTATION WOULD BE EQUAL.

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6. IN THE CASE OF A CDU MINORITY OR COALITION GOVERNMENT, THE VOTING BEHAVIOR OF LOWER SAXONY IN THE BUNDES-RAT WOULD DEPEND UPON WHAT ARRANGEMENT ALBRECHT HAD WORKED OUT BEFOREHAND IN ORDER TO OBTAIN TACIT OR EXPLICIT SUPPORT IN THE LANDTAG.

7. THE POLISH AGREEMENTS (NOTE: ONLY THE PENSION ARRANGEMENT REQUIRES A MAJORITY VOTE IN THE BUNDES-RAT BUT THE POLES WOULD NOT SIGN THE OTHER AGREEMENTS WITHOUT THE PENSION SETTLEMENT) WILL REQUIRE THAT LOWER SAXONY VOTE FOR THE AGREEMENTS. THEREFORE, DEVELOPMENTS IN HANNOVER ARE OF CRITICAL IMPORTANCE TO THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FATE OF THE AGREEMENTS.

8. NO MATTER HOW THE POLITICAL SITUATION EVOLVES IN HANNOVER, THE ELECTION OF A CDU MINISTER PRESIDENT JAN 15 WAS A SETBACK TO THE SOCIAL-LIBERAL COALITION IN BONN. NOT ONLY WILL ALBRECHT'S ELECTION BE A PSYCHOLOGICAL BOOST TO THE CDU IN THE FORTHCOMING BUNDESTAG ELECTION, BUT IT WILL ALSO SERVE TO ENCOURAGE THOSE FDP MEMBERS WHO PREFER A COALITION WITH THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS RATHER THAN THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS. THE SUSPICION THAT IT WAS FDP DEPUTIES WHO DESERTED THE COALITION IN HANNOVER WILL NOT HELP RELATIONS BETWEEN THE COALITION PARTNERS IN BONN. ALBRECHT'S ELECTION, HOWEVER, WAS ONLY THE FIRST ACT OF THE DRAMA IN HANNOVER AND A CONSIDERABLE AMOUNT OF POLITICAL ACTIVITY, NOT TO MENTION INTRIGUE, CAN BE EXPECTED BEFORE THE FINAL CURTAIN.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ELECTION RESULTS, PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT, POLITICAL PARTIES, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 16 JAN 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: morefirh
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976BONN00763
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760016-1042
From: BONN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760151/aaaabtdm.tel
Line Count: 206
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 HAMBURG 36
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: morefirh
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 25 MAR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <25 MAR 2004 by izenbei0>; APPROVED <23 APR 2004 by morefirh>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: NATIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF LOWER SAXONY GOVERN- MENT CHANGE
TAGS: PINT, PGOV, GE, CDU, (ALBRECHT, ERNST)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006